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THE SEMI-WEEKLY ASTORIAN.

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ASTORIAN PUBLISHING COMPANY.

A POSTAL REFORM.

The postoffice department has secured from the supreme court a reform which it has long sought in vain from congress. The decision that the department is not obliged to handle books published serially as second class matter is in harmony with justice and common sense. The custom which was allowed to grow up of burdening the mails with books which were in no sense periodicals, except as pieces of cloth are periodicals when they come from the loom at regular intervals, was an imposition on the taxpayers.

The framers of the law never intended to open the door to an express business at second class postage rates, says the Tribune. The publishers only gradually discovered the possibilities open to them by liberal construction of the law, and, going step by step in claiming privileges for publications less and less resembling the newspaper or true magazine, they were able finally to get the department to transit their wares as of right, without, perhaps, perceiving for a long time how much it was being imposed upon. The abuse went so far that publishers issued sets of standard works, a volume a month or a volume a quarter, and asked that they be transmitted as periodicals at the newspaper rate. The department sought to have periodicals more strictly defined by congress, but without success, and finally determined not to let itself be controlled by bad customs which it had been led into, but to administer the law according to its pristine meaning. Accordingly, it refused to transmit at second class rates matter which was not periodical in the ordinary sense, and not to accept as periodicals publications which were obviously put in that guise merely to secure cheap transportation. Now the supreme court has sustained that position.

The second class mail is one of the heaviest expenses of the department. It does not nearly pay for itself. The cost is in the public interest, making possible as it does the wide dissemination of intelligence. Any abuse of the privileges of second class rates, however, prevents the introduction of other postal conveniences. Therefore, the present decision restricting them to legitimate periodicals gives promises of more extended rural delivery, of one cent letter postage at an earlier date, and possibly of a parcels post system. If the publishers who find themselves deprived of the second class rate for their books would devote themselves to devising and pushing a reasonable scheme for a parcels post they might do themselves and the country some good. Express rates for many parcels are unreasonably high, particularly for short distances. Another oppressive restriction on commerce is the regulation by which small packages, even newspaper bundles, which come by mail from abroad are here turned over to express companies for domestic delivery at a cost to the recipient often many times what a parcel is worth. By confining the postal service to legitimate business for each class of matter, the department's revenues can be conserved and improvements made of vast general benefit, in line with the most advanced practice of Europe.

JAPAN'S NAVAL COMMANDER.

Admiral Togo is the naval hero of the new century, says the Ledger. He is being called the "Nelson of Japan." It is nearly one hundred years since Admiral Horatio Nelson won his memorable victory at Trafalgar over the combined fleets of France and Spain. There were 33 ships under Nelson's command in the engagement against 40 of the allies, whose guns were decidedly heavier. Nelson was mortally wounded in the battle, but lived to see half of the enemy's fleet destroyed and the day won. His signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," was magnificently obeyed. The battle of Trafalgar and Nelson's death occurred October 21, 1805.

As captain of the protected cruiser Naniwa, Vice Admiral Togo fired the first shot at the battle of the Yalu, during the war with China in 1894. He is a man of initiative and of indomitable perseverance. He was selected to take command of the Japanese fleet in the present war, because those qualities were well known and he enjoyed the confidence and held the admiration of the elder statesmen of Japan. He was promoted to the rank of vice admiral for valor at the battle of the Yalu. It has been reported that

at Port Arthur, with shells bursting all around him, he was the coolest man on the deck of his flagship.

Admiral Togo is a native of Kumamoto, an interior town of some 30,000 inhabitants, about 100 miles south of Nagasaki. Thirty-seven years ago, when Togo was a lad of 17, the feudal lord of the town declared allegiance to the mikado, and Togo offered his services to the emperor. As soon as the mikado determined to have a modern navy, Togo applied for a position and was sent to England to receive the proper education and training. He became a commander and had Japanese training ships under his command before the outbreak of the war with China. Many of the cadets who were under him then are prominent naval officers now. Admiral Togo has had as much as anyone to do with the wonderful improvement in the Japanese navy, and especially in the discipline and efficiency of the naval forces.

THE SWAYNE IMPEACHMENT.

Wholly apart from the justice or the injustice of the charges against him and without regard to his character in general, the Commercial has recently expressed the opinion that the appointment of Judge Charles Swayne to a place on the federal bench in Florida was a mistake. Our contention was that his temperament at the outset was a serious obstacle to his success there, and that another sort of man appointed in 1889 would have made the present situation impossible.

On the strength of a majority report from the house committee on the judiciary Judge Swayne will be called upon to defend himself in impeachment proceedings before the United States senate next December. It is not a little strange that this case attracted practically no attention outside of Florida and provoked only the most limited press comment while it was under committee investigation in the house. Now, however, that it has taken the shape of the formal impeachment of a federal judge before the senate sitting as a court, its rather extraordinary character is drawing it under general discussion. A minority report signed by six republican committee-men exonerates Judge Swayne from the charge, but its appearance was tardy and its preparation apparently an afterthought—a circumstance that invests the case with an unusual character.

Another peculiarity attaching to it is the attitude of the defendant himself. While a sub-committee had him under personal examination in Florida, he was obviously wholly indifferent to the proceedings. He did make a general denial, but appeared to take no special pains to acquit himself of the charges or to prevent an adverse report through the interposition of friendly influence—and he is not without these. This provokes a suspicion that he rather courted formal impeachment—that he preferred to stand trial before the senate to accepting vindication by what might be called a "whitewash" in the house; in other words, could get his defense before the country in stronger form through impeachment proceedings, would be protected rigidly in all his rights as before a judge and a jury and could "get at" his enemies with greater force and effect. He will now have eight months in which to prepare his defense.

Has Judge Swayne got something up his sleeve with which to confound the Floridians whom he regards as his personal persecutors? Has he assumed indifference, where his character, his professional honor and his integrity as a jurist are at stake, only to make his final vindication the more sweeping and triumphant and the rout of his enemies the more complete?

As an ordinary "proposition" Judge Swayne is a good deal of an iceberg, but nobody ever accused him of lacking vindictiveness.

One voting machine bill has been killed at Albany, but the worst one remains—the O'Neill bill, which is mandatory. The defunct bill was known as the Davis bill, and was permissive merely. The other will come up in the assembly for consideration tomorrow, but, fortunately, there is little chance of its getting through the senate, even though it passes the lower house, as it would require an emergency message from the governor to secure its passage before the legislature adjourns, and Mr. Odell is hardly likely to make an emergency of such a matter. There would, indeed, be no excuse for such a course. While it may come to pass that voting machines will be used at our public elections, the proper time for that consummation has evidently not yet arrived. The best of the machines is still imperfect, and there is in its construction no guarantee against fraud. On the contrary there is too great an opportunity for it, since it is recorded that one voter, down in Connecticut, either by design or through ignorance, "punched up" 100 votes, and a republican election commissioner is quoted as saying there is nothing, that he can see, to prevent a man from voting 9999 times. This is a possibility not to be contemplated with equanimity. The fact that both great political parties are opposed to the use of the machine as at present developed is significant. The race today does a great deal of its work by machinery, but there is evidently a limit.

It is easy to get a submarine boat down into the Davy Jones country, but it generally takes several derrieks to get her back into the sunlight.

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Sorry for the Lion.

Among the children attending a Western Addition kindergarten is little Alice, the well known daughter of a local newspaper man. A few days ago a visitor exhibited to the little folks some large colored pictures depicting the sufferings of the early Christians. One illustration showed a lion's den, in which the animals were industrially worrying Christian men and maids. As the children watched the picture the visitor told a story appropriate to the illustration. None showed more eager interest than did little Alice. She listened attentively. Her alert glance moved from speaker to picture as her ears drank in the tale of the cruelty of Nero.

The child's interest attracted the visitor and soon he found himself addressing little Alice to the exclusion of all others. She, at least, understood and appreciated the story.

There was a pause in the tale. Up went little Alice's hand: "Please, teacher." "What is it, Alice?" "Please, teacher, there's one poor lion hasn't got any martyr."—S. F. Call.

Zebra Tandems.

A few devotees of the whimsical and the eccentric are talking of breaking and training zebras for family pleasure driving in Hyde park, London. Friends of the zebras say they can easily be made docile and tractable in drawing smart wagons and will afford a refreshing novelty of contrasts among the horses and automobiles. Quagga are also well thought of. It's a great pity that giraffes are now so rare and hard to get. How agreeable a spectacle a four-in-hand team of spotted skyscrapers, imported from Africa, would afford in Rotten row! Two enormous ostriches, wearing superb plumes of their own, would also doubtless gratify the spectators if hitched to a big park phaeton.

A THOUGHTFUL MAN.

M. M. Austin, of Winchester, Ind., knew what to do in the hour of need. His wife had such an unusual case of stomach and liver trouble, physicians could not help her. He thought of and tried Dr. King's New Life Pills and she got relief at once and was finally cured. Only 25c at Charles Rogers' drug store.

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LEAVE	PORTLAND	ARRIVE
8:00 a.m.	Portland Union Depot	11:10 a.m.
7:00 p.m.	Portland Union Depot	9:40 p.m.

ASTORIA

LEAVE	ASTORIA	ARRIVE
7:45 a.m.	For Portland and Way Points	11:30 a.m.
6:15 p.m.	For Portland and Way Points	10:30 p.m.

SEASIDE DIVISION

LEAVE	SEASIDE	ARRIVE
8:15 a.m.	Astoria for Warrenton, Flavel, Stevens, Hammond and Seaside	7:40 a.m.
11:35 a.m.	Astoria for Warrenton, Flavel, Stevens, Hammond and Seaside	4:00 p.m.
5:50 p.m.	Astoria for Warrenton, Flavel, Stevens, Hammond and Seaside	10:45 a.m.
6:15 a.m.	Seaside for Warrenton, Flavel, Stevens, Hammond and Astoria	12:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.	Seaside for Warrenton, Flavel, Stevens, Hammond and Astoria	7:30 p.m.
2:30 p.m.	Seaside for Warrenton, Flavel, Stevens, Hammond and Astoria	9:35 a.m.

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